

Global Education for All Students: Innovation & Integration in Expanding Learning Abroad

A Teagle Foundation White Paper



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August 2007

Acknowledgements

It takes a college to make it happen. The student, staff, faculty, and alumnae participants in the Mount Holyoke College working group '*Expanding Learning Opportunities Abroad for all Students*' generously shared their time and creative and critical thinking on the key issues analyzed in this White Paper. The good will, the energy, and the cooperation of many offices at the college made the implementation of ensuing policies possible.

We would especially like to acknowledge Darby Dyar for her leadership and tireless efforts in the development of the universal application form for summer opportunities and the summer activities data base, Mike Robinson for the in-depth statistical analysis of all the surveys and data sets we use in this paper, Alison Donta for her unfailing enthusiasm and skill in mounting yet another survey, Tara Fitzpatrick for her writing support at key stages in the process, and Jennifer Medina for invaluable assistance during the course of the whole project.

To the Teagle Foundation, under the visionary leadership of Robert Connor and Donna Heiland, we express our deep gratitude for their support.

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Executive Summary

Many U.S. colleges and universities have now endorsed the goal of making learning abroad an integral part of undergraduate education. In this White Paper we map out ways for expanding learning abroad opportunities in educationally meaningful and financially viable ways. The analysis and the recommendations are based on the experience of Mount Holyoke College, contextualized in best practices in the field. We anticipate that they will be of use to others, irrespective of whether they are at a liberal arts college or a different type of institution of higher learning, as we are all wrestling with similar challenges in our aspirations to make learning abroad possible for more, and eventually all, students.

With the support of a Teagle grant, Mount Holyoke faculty, students, administrators and alumnae met initially as a large group and then in subgroups over a period of one and a half years focusing their inquiry and discussions on three major areas: (1) how to entice all students to learn abroad; (2) how to expand summer and study abroad in a financially sustainable way; and (3) how better to integrate students' learning abroad experiences into their educational pathways.

Among the many lessons and suggestions we share in this paper, two stand high above the others: the importance of a *coordinated and integrative process and strategy in the conceptualization and implementation of a quantum leap in learning abroad*, and *the pivotal role of the faculty* in making many of the critical steps in the expansion and integration of learning abroad happen.

The expansion of learning abroad in a substantial, meaningful, and financially feasible way requires concerted effort and collaboration among all stakeholders. This is true for the implementation of the Lincoln Commission's ambitious goal as well as for that of an individual institution like Mount Holyoke College, which aims to enable every student to learn abroad at some point during her college years, whether through summer internships, research opportunities or more structured credit-bearing study abroad experiences.

A centralized office is needed to take charge of the implementation of an institutional mandate for global education. That office can initiate a review and an analysis of learning abroad at the institution and bring together the relevant parties in the conceptualization and implementation of an overall plan and specific policies. And while that office must take responsibility for most of the work involved, it is the systemic and coordinated collaboration among different actors that will be the key to success.

Different administrative entities are in charge of promoting, funding, and overseeing various aspects of learning abroad at most U.S. colleges and universities. Such a structure makes it impossible to have a comprehensive picture of learning abroad at an institution, which is needed as a baseline for analysis and assessment; and it limits the possibility for maximizing synergies in helping students integrate the learning abroad experience into their course of study. We suggest ways in which an institution can overcome these challenges.

Our statistical analysis shows that, controlling for other factors including a student's major and family contribution, the single most important determinant of a student's decision to study abroad is encouragement, from parents and particularly from faculty. In conversations

we found that most professors are quite supportive of learning abroad. But support in the abstract often does not result in support in practice. Professors may not discuss learning abroad with their students for a variety of reasons. In this paper, we outline different ways in which we might encourage a translation from theory into practice.

When individual faculty members embrace the value of learning abroad, it is more likely that they will make learning abroad an integral part of their advising and mentoring relationships with students, before they go abroad and when they return. And then learning abroad will seem a more viable and important option to students from groups who are under-represented in learning abroad: science majors, students of color, and the risk-averse students.

Strategies to encourage more students to learn abroad are aimed at increasing the demand for learning abroad, especially from under-represented groups. Of equal importance, however, are policies targeted at increasing the supply of learning abroad opportunities. Demand- and supply-directed measures have to move forward in tandem to make growth in learning abroad educationally fulfilling as well as financially viable.

The main challenge on the supply side can be summarized in one word: *resources*. We estimated that if we want to fund all Mount Holyoke students for either study abroad or an international internship, we would need an additional \$1 million a year. That does not include the cost of the additional staffing that would be required to support a 100 percent learning abroad rate. Most institutions face similar financial challenges. There is no magic solution for bridging the gap between the current percentage of students learning abroad and the goal of 100 percent. Rather, the answer is a sustained effort on a number of different fronts over an extended period of time.

We discuss a range of strategies to enable more students to study abroad or pursue summer opportunities in other countries. We suggest that summer internships and learning abroad offerings have to be an important part of a college's learning abroad offerings, as they provide an educationally powerful and institutionally cost-effective way of developing global competencies in our students. Developing an international internship network, where we can tap into the international connections of our faculty, alumnae, and others related to the college is an especially promising way to generate unique internship opportunities for students that can be maintained and developed further over time.

To bring about a quantum leap in learning abroad, it is important for an institution to move on as many fronts as possible at the same time. Some of the strategies we discuss require significant resources, others do not. But all depend critically on an institutional commitment to translating lofty rhetoric about the integration and expansion of learning abroad into tangible educational outcomes for students.

I. Rationale and Goals of the Study

The Importance of Learning Abroad in the 21st Century

Institutions of higher learning have a duty to inculcate in their students a sense of responsibility for the common good, grounded in respect and concern for others, while providing them with the skills they will need for a successful career and responsible life in today’s rapidly changing global environment. Education for global competence and citizenship happens through many venues on campus, in and outside the classroom.

“For their own future and that of the nation, it is essential that college graduates today become globally competent.”
Lincoln Commission (2005)

But there is no substitute for the learning experience of living abroad. Traditional study abroad programs, research projects, and internships abroad provide unique opportunities for a student to learn about and appreciate cultures and perspectives different from her/his own, to confront and explore her/his own assumptions, to achieve greater proficiency in another language and to grapple with the challenge of living in an unfamiliar context.

To date, only a small percentage of U.S. college students participate in traditional study abroad programs, the only form of learning abroad for which national data are available (see Table 1). Yet, awareness of the urgency of expanding learning abroad is reflected in recent public opinion polls and policy initiatives in the United States and elsewhere. More than 75 percent of parents with children in college consider it important for them to study abroad during their college years (NAFSA 2006). And in 2005, the Lincoln Commission called for a quintupling of the annual number of U.S. students studying abroad to one million by 2016-17 (Commission 2005).¹

Doctoral Institutions	Master’s I & II	Baccalaureate All	Associate’s	Specialized	All
10.0	4.5	9.4	0.3	1.4	4.7

Calculated based on IIE (2007) and Carnegie Foundation (2005).

This study aims to enhance our understanding of how we can increase learning abroad opportunities for all students, in an educationally meaningful and financially feasible way. Our analysis and recommendations are based on the experience of Mount Holyoke College (MHC), which adopted an institutional mandate for global education, and they are contextualized in some of the best practices in the field.

¹ The growing recognition of the importance of international education and study abroad is also reflected in the rising number of states that have adopted resolutions to that effect. In May 2007, Minnesota became the 13th state to adopt a resolution on the importance of international education (NAFSA 2007a). In other parts of the world, the efforts to promote international education and learning abroad have increased as well. The European Union, for example, has been pushing international student and faculty exchange through the SOKRATES/ERASMUS program.

The Mount Holyoke Case: Implementing an Institutional Mandate for Global Education

Mount Holyoke College, a premier liberal arts college and the oldest institution of higher education for women in the U.S., has a long tradition of international engagement. It offers a rich array of curricular and co-curricular programs with an international dimension and has a highly diverse international student body and faculty. It is among the most international of the national liberal arts colleges, with about 16 percent of its roughly 2,100 students composed of international students from some seventy countries around the globe. The faculty is even more internationally diverse; over 30 percent of faculty members were born abroad. The international diversity of the Mount Holyoke community provides a powerful setting for education for global citizenship, in and outside the classroom.

“We will internationalize the educational experience of all students to prepare them for citizenship and leadership in a complex, interconnected world.”
Mount Holyoke College Plan for 2010 (2003)

In 2003, Mount Holyoke College adopted a strategic plan, *The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2010*, which highlighted education for global citizenship as a top priority for the college. The institutional mandate for global education resulted in the founding of the Center for Global Initiatives, which was charged with uniting Mount Holyoke’s wealth of international programs and people and implementing a coherent vision for education for global citizenship. The Center, renamed the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives (MCGI) in October 2006, promotes and coordinates on-campus intellectual engagement with global issues through a series of public programs and curricular initiatives, including distinguished global visiting lectureships, biennial conferences on critical global challenges, and interdisciplinary seminars in which faculty develop new curricula that explore key global issues. With the intent of bringing together previously disparate aspects of international education, the study abroad office and the international student office were integrated into the center. In addition, we established a new staff position to develop an international internship program and to promote summer research abroad. This administrative restructuring has generated important synergies, especially in the promotion and development of learning abroad opportunities and their integration into students’ education.

The expansion of learning abroad in a substantial, meaningful, and financially feasible way requires concerted effort and collaboration among all stakeholders. This is true for the implementation of the Lincoln Commission’s ambitious goal as well as for that of an individual institution like Mount Holyoke College, which aims to enable every student to learn abroad at some point during her college years, whether through summer internships, research opportunities or more structured credit-bearing study abroad experiences.

A grant from the Teagle Foundation allowed us to bring together a working group of all constituencies of the college to develop a strategy for a leap forward in learning abroad and to initiate its implementation. Faculty, students, administrators and alumnae met initially as a large group and then in subgroups over a period of one and a half years focusing their inquiry and discussions on three major areas: (1) how to entice all students to learn abroad; (2) how to expand summer and study abroad in a financially sustainable way; and (3) how better to

integrate students' learning abroad experiences into their educational pathway.² In addition we gathered information on best practices at other institutions; we hosted a conference on best practices and challenges in learning abroad in July 2006.³ There are many schools with exemplary practices in specific areas that deserve to be highlighted. But our intention, for our own purposes and for this White Paper, has been to present key best practices without providing an exhaustive overview of who is doing what.

Among the many lessons and suggestions we share in this paper, two stand high above the others. *First*, the critical importance of a coordinated, integrative process and strategy that brings all the relevant agents together in the conceptualization and implementation of a strategy to expand learning abroad. And *second*, the pivotal role of the faculty in making many of the critical steps in the expansion of learning abroad happen.



The McCulloch Center is committed to developing in all of our students, whatever their major areas of study, a more active engagement with cultures and perspectives outside the United States, an understanding of the impact of globalization on human well-being, and of possible solutions to the critical problems of our world.

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McCulloch Center for Global
Initiatives*

The multi-faceted composition of the working group proved to be critical in the joint development of a strategic plan and, more importantly, in the initial implementation of its recommendations. Against the backdrop of an institutional mandate for global education, different members and offices of the institution were highly responsive to the calls for collaboration in implementing specific actions/policies that were the outcome of the working group's deliberations. The MCGI played a critical role in spearheading brainstorming sessions, in bringing the relevant parties together around the implementation of a particular policy, and in taking responsibility for the work involved with coordinating and executing policies. But it is the systematic and coordinated collaboration among different actors and the integrative nature of the strategy which rendered the success we have achieved to date.

While collaboration among all actors is important in advancing learning abroad, some actors are more important than others; and we found that ***the faculty is the key in the leap forward strategy.***

² The working group included seven faculty members (from the departments of economics, chemistry, geology, religion, German studies, and international relations), seven administrators (the director of the MCGI, the Dean of International Studies, the Director of International Experiential Learning, the Director of Student Financial Services, the Director of Corporations and Foundations, the Director of Sponsored Research, and the Executive Director of the Alumnae Association), four students, and eight alumnae (two of them trustees and four of them living outside the U.S.).

³ The participants came from some of the colleges where a very high percentage of students study abroad (Colby College, Dickinson College, Goucher College, Kalamazoo College, Wellesley College), and from colleges and universities which are at the forefront of developing international internship programs (Oregon State University, Princeton University, Yale University, and York University) and interesting curricular programs with an embedded learning abroad component (Lehigh University).

The faculty member's role is critical as she/he:

- strongly encourages her/his advisees from day one to consider learning abroad as an integral part of a liberal arts education,
- visits specific universities abroad to assess the fit of the program with the needs of her/his major;
- facilitates summer research or internship opportunities through her/his research contacts abroad, and
- ventures into unknown territory abroad and comes back as a more informed, enthused and intellectually and internationally curious scholar and advisor.

Many U.S. colleges and universities have now endorsed the goal of increasing the learning abroad component of undergraduate education. We are all wrestling with similar challenges in our aspirations. We anticipate that our thorough examination of how to address these challenges will be of use to others, irrespective of whether they are at a liberal arts college or a different type of institution of higher learning in the U.S.



I now look upon Global Initiatives as a sort of liberal arts program for people like me—another way to leaven my teaching with comparative perspectives, if only through brief forays abroad.

Chris Pyle, Professor of Politics (after lecturing for two weeks at BLCU, our partner university in China, in 2007)

In section II, we provide a snapshot of learning abroad at Mount Holyoke, analyzing characteristics of students who are under-represented in learning abroad and the driving factors in their decision of whether or not to study abroad. That analysis serves as the basis for discussion, in section III, of how to entice more students to consider learning abroad as an option for them. Where section III deals with increasing the demand for study abroad, section IV focuses on increasing the supply of meaningful learning abroad opportunities in a financially viable way, through study abroad as well as international summer internships and research. In section V, we highlight best practices of how to integrate learning abroad into students' educational pathway. And in section VI, we focus on assessment.

II. Taking Stock: Who Studies Abroad? And Why Don't the Others?

The first step in formulating a plan to expand meaningful learning abroad opportunities is an analysis of the present state of affairs. *Who studies abroad, who pursues internships or research projects? Which factors motivate some students to seek out learning abroad opportunities, sometimes more than once, and which make others shy away from them?*

Limits of the Existing Administrative Structure

Different administrative entities are in charge of promoting, funding, and overseeing various aspects of learning abroad at institutions of higher learning in the U.S. Mount Holyoke College is no exception. Study abroad and the development of an international internship network are under the auspices of the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives; the Career Development Center oversees and allocates some funds for summer internships, including international ones; the Dean of the College's Office allocates some funds for summer internships and research (at home and abroad), and some academic departments do the same. Data are entered in different systems and are not always kept systematically over time. And there are no systematic data on students' summer activities abroad unless they are funded by the college. It became clear that the existing structure is inadequate for providing a comprehensive picture of learning abroad at Mount Holyoke College and a baseline against which to measure subsequent outcomes.

Data about learning abroad is scattered, and responsible parties coordinate only sporadically.

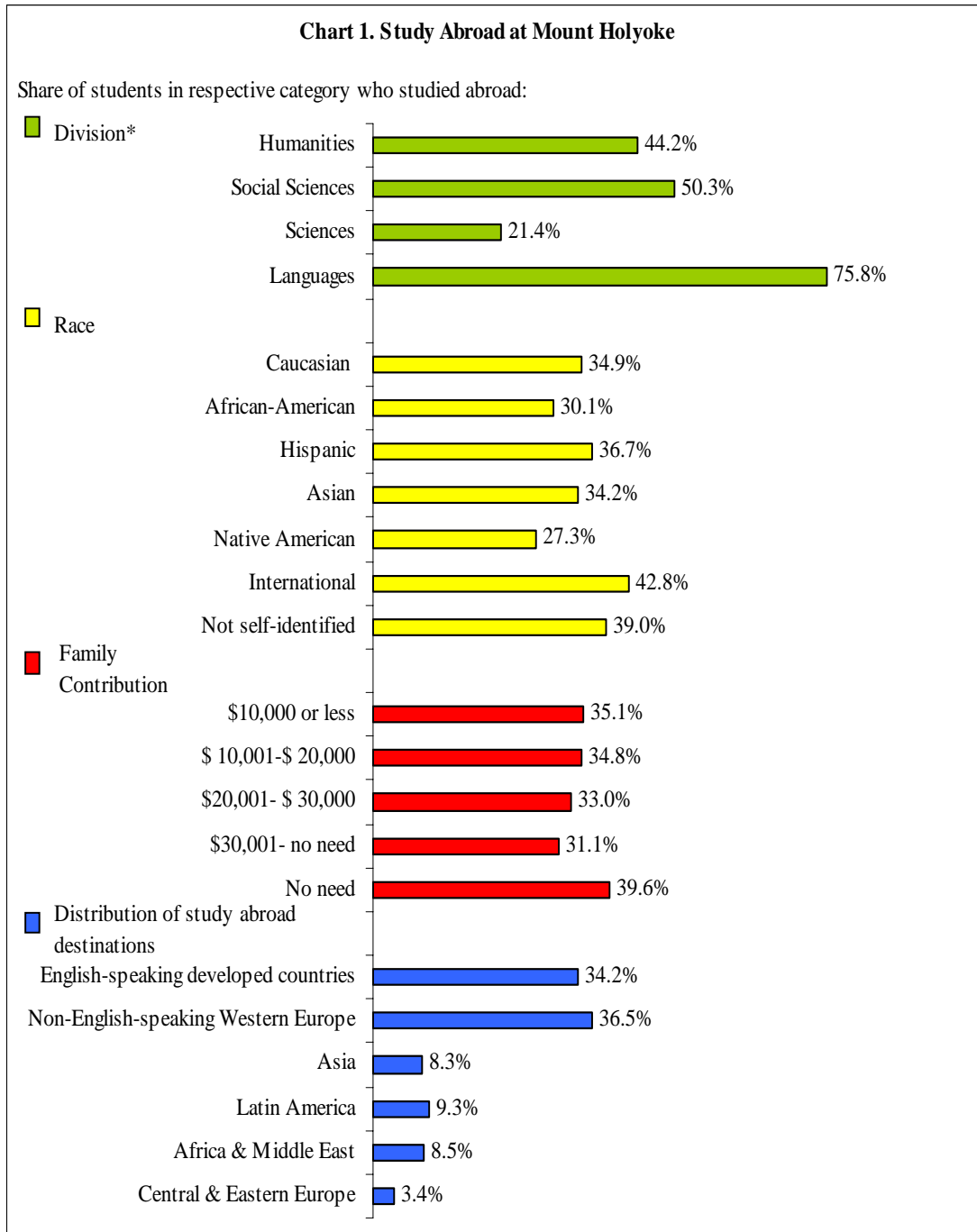
We have, of course, an approximate sense of magnitudes. We know that around 40-45 percent of our students study abroad for a semester, year, or short-term program. Of the respondents to the senior survey in May 2007, 16.7 percent indicated that they had had an internship abroad. And 64 students, the equivalent of 12.4 percent of the senior class, were funded through Mount Holyoke College for learning opportunities abroad for the summer of 2007. So, all in all, we estimate that about 55-60 percent of any given graduating class had a learning experience abroad, whether through study abroad, international internships, or a research project abroad.⁴ But study abroad is the only area where we have detailed information for every student, as the Dean of International Studies approves the plan for study abroad for each student. As a result, our systematic analysis of the 'who' and 'why' in 'learning abroad' is limited to those students who study abroad.

Which Students Study Abroad?

Mount Holyoke College operates on a semester system, with a three-week optional interim term during January. The college does not charge home school fees for study abroad; rather a financial aid student can apply for a Laurel fellowship to cover her study abroad expenses. Since MHC runs very few programs of its own, the vast majority of our students enroll in other programs. The synopsis in Chart 1 is based on MHC students who entered the college

⁴ We cannot assume that the percentages for study abroad students and for students who had an international internship abroad are additive. For the class of 2007, for example, 11.2 percent of those who had not studied abroad had an internship abroad, whereas 24.3 percent of those who had studied abroad also had an internship abroad.

between 2001 and 2004 and studied abroad for a semester or year.⁵ On average, 36 percent of each class studied abroad.



*Includes only those students who had declared a major at the time of this study. Languages are not also included under humanities.

⁵ An additional 10 percent of students per class participate in J-term and summer courses abroad.

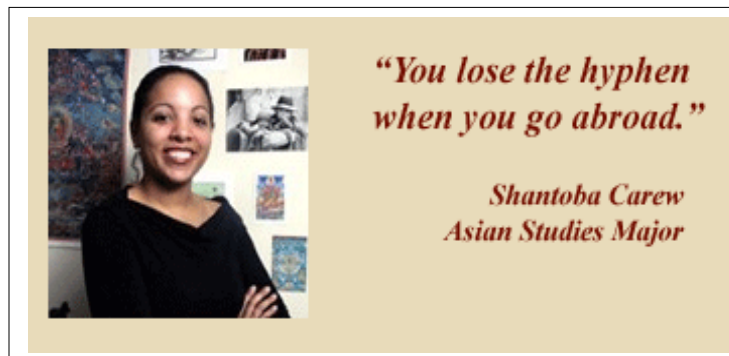
The profile of MHC students studying abroad mirrors the national picture in important ways:

- **Western developed countries predominate as a study abroad destination.** Around 70 percent of our students study in English-speaking developed countries and non-English-speaking Western European countries.⁶
- **Science majors are under-represented.** Our analysis shows that a science major is 23 percent less likely to study abroad, while a language major is 30 percent more likely to study abroad.⁷

In other respects, however, the study abroad profile at MHC is rather different from the national average:

- **Our students study abroad for considerably longer periods.** Around 43 percent of our students who study abroad do so for the year, compared to only six percent nationally (IIE 2007, 61). Longer immersion abroad holds out the potential for more profound learning experiences; but when a large percentage of students chooses that option, the cost of study abroad for the institution rises considerably.

- **Their diversity is much greater.** Students of color are generally under-represented in study abroad (e.g., Dessoff 2006, Jackson 2005, LeMay Burr 2005). At MHC, only the study abroad ratio for African-American students is below the average, whereas the ratio for



Hispanic and Asian American students is around the average, and for international students it is above the average. Nonetheless, once we control for other factors (e.g. major), racial background does not play a statistically significant role in the likelihood of an MHC student studying abroad.

- **Family income is only a minor factor in studying abroad.**⁸ Students from lower income families are often found to be under-represented in study abroad. At MHC, we

⁶ This concentration is also found among member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to Stichweh (2007), in 2004, around 75 percent of study abroad students from OECD countries studied in Western European and English-speaking developed countries (including the United States).

⁷ We used a probit analysis, where the independent variables included major division, region of origin, family contribution, and ethnicity/race, among others.

⁸ Since Mount Holyoke College is a liberal arts college for women, we do not discuss here another group that is highly under represented at the national level: men. In 2004-05, only 34.5 percent of U.S. students studying abroad were men (IIE 2007, 62).

discovered that family income plays a relatively small role in our students' ability to study abroad. Our analysis indicates that every \$ 10,000 in additional family contribution increases by three percent the likelihood that a student will study abroad. This result provides powerful testimony to the effectiveness of our Laurel Fellowship Program which supports financial aid students studying abroad.

We found two interesting characteristics of study abroad students which have not been discussed much in the literature:

- **Students with a higher GPA are more likely to study abroad.** Since Mount Holyoke College has a minimum GPA requirement for study abroad (2.7), GPA is an obvious separator between those who can and those who cannot study abroad. However, we found that GPA also matters within the group of those eligible for study abroad. Based on responses of the 2007 senior survey, half of the students with a GPA in the A-range studied abroad, whereas the study abroad ratio of those with a GPA in the B-range was only slightly over 20 percent.

It may be that students with a lower GPA feel less confident about their ability to succeed abroad. While we may not think of a B average as "low," many students, especially those attending highly selective colleges, perceive any grade less than an A or A- as inadequate. Students may also feel pressure to raise their GPA, which cannot happen on the basis of work abroad at institutions that, like Mount Holyoke, transfer in only credit and not grades. Or students may have unrealistic ideas about the difficulty of gaining admission to a good program or university abroad, especially if they are focusing only on the most prestigious universities (e.g., Oxford) as worthwhile options.



I gained insight into the challenges children face in East Asia and the Pacific and got an insider's perspective on how the great minds (and hearts) of the world are making a difference. At the very least, it has strengthened my conviction to be an agent of change.

Qimti Paienjton '08, Research Intern, UNICEF, Bangkok, Thailand

- **Students who come from further away are more likely to study abroad.** Controlling for other factors (e.g. major), U.S. citizens living abroad are 15% more likely to study abroad than students from New England; and students from the Pacific region are 9% more likely to study abroad. But only 28% of our students from Massachusetts and New Hampshire studied abroad. These data suggest that risk aversion may be a factor in a student's decision to study abroad.

What Drives the Study Abroad Decision?

Tight course sequencing in the major, participation in athletics, and concerns about credit transfer, safety abroad, and financing are commonly among the main reasons students give for not studying abroad (e.g. Thompson 2007, Dessoiff 2006). In the senior survey, we asked

members of the class of 2007 to assess the relative importance of these factors in their decision not to study abroad. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Relative Importance of Perceived Obstacles to Studying Abroad (% of students that did not study abroad who considered the factor ‘very important’ or ‘important’, n=238)	
Need to fulfill major requirements	57.0
Concern about financing	47.2
Participate in athletics	32.2
Concern about credits transferring	28.6
Family obligations	25.8
Apprehension about different environment	15.5
Concerns about safety abroad	11.5

At the top of the list is the need to fulfill major requirements; interestingly for science majors the percentage is ‘only’ 51 percent, while it is 63 percent for social studies majors. With respect to the second and third most important reason, it is clear that perception is different from reality, as reflected in the actual data of who studies abroad. We already saw that students from lower income families are only slightly less likely to study abroad. And as for participation in athletics, the senior survey shows that half of those who participated in athletics did indeed study abroad, considerably above the average of 36 percent for all MHC students during the period we are analyzing.

Our analysis suggests that the single most important factor behind a student’s decision to study abroad is encouragement, from parents and particularly from faculty.

Our multivariate analysis across divisions shows that the only statistically significant determinants of studying abroad are whether a student is a language major and whether she was encouraged by her parents or by faculty. Importantly, faculty support is twice as important as parent support. Of the students who were strongly encouraged to study abroad, more than three quarters did indeed do so; but of the students who were not encouraged, only slightly more than one quarter studied abroad (see Table 3). Our analysis provides powerful empirical support for the common assertion that advisors can play an important role in promoting study abroad.

Table 3. Effect of Encouragement on Study Abroad Decision			
Encouragement from	% studying abroad that were strongly encouraged	% studying abroad that were encouraged	% studying abroad that were not encouraged
Parents	77.9	63.5	27.2
Friends	79.1	58.3	28.5
Faculty	88.2	60.6	27.7

The encouragement factor seems to be closely linked to the under-representation of science majors in study abroad. Students in the sciences report substantially lower encouragement from faculty members than students in the other divisions (see Table 4).

Table 4. Students by Division Indicating the Importance of Faculty (Parent) Support in their Decision to Study Abroad				
(percentage distribution by division)	Sciences	Social Sc.	Humanities	Languages
Strongly encouraged	11.4 (25.7)	31.4 (31.6)	38.6 (32.4)	80.8 (51.9)
Encouraged	21.4 (31.4)	22.4 (24.1)	18.8 (32.4)	11.5 (33.3)
Played no role	57.1 (41.4)	38.5 (36.7)	35.6 (30.4)	7.7 (14.8)
Discouraged	8.6 (10)	6.4 (7)	5.9 (4.9)	0 (0)
Strongly Discouraged	1.4 (1.4)	1.3 (.6)	1.0 (0)	0 (0)

Though we did not ask students specifically about the departmental origin of the faculty who encouraged them to study abroad, it is a reasonable supposition that the faculty most likely to play an important role in a student's decision to study abroad are indeed the faculty in the student's major. Very few students in the sciences are actively discouraged from studying abroad, but the important point is that they do not feel encouraged either. Seventy percent of science majors who reported having been strongly encouraged by faculty did study abroad. But for the majority of science majors, faculty members did not play a role.

Parent support seems to be particularly important when analyzing study abroad behavior across race. All the African-American students who responded to our senior survey indicated that they had not received parent encouragement to study abroad, and none of them studied abroad. However, since the number of African-American students who answered the survey is small, these results can only be taken as suggestive.

III. Bringing on Board the Students who are Shying Away from Learning Abroad

The analysis in the previous section has identified faculty and parent encouragement as the pivotal factor in enticing more students to consider learning abroad as a desirable and possible option for them. Thus, if we want to persuade more students of the value of learning abroad, we need to focus on enlisting faculty and parents in that endeavor. The support of faculty and parents needs to be complemented, of course, by other actions aimed directly at addressing some of the students' concerns. But we are convinced that the role of faculty and parents is decisive in getting more students to integrate a learning abroad experience into their college education.

Enlisting More Faculty Members in the Expansion of Learning Abroad

In conversations we found that most professors are quite supportive of learning abroad. But support in the abstract often does not translate into support in practice. Professors may not discuss learning abroad with their students for a variety of reasons. In certain majors, like foreign languages, the importance of learning abroad to the major is self-evident. In other majors, it is less obvious that learning abroad is important for the major; and a professor may not have thought about the importance of learning abroad as a critical element of every student's education, irrespective of her major. In addition, faculty members are often not well informed about where their students could study abroad or which summer opportunities abroad might be available to them. And they may consider a discussion about learning abroad outside of their purview or responsibility.

We concluded that we had to move education about learning abroad, programs, and procedures beyond the general fora to the department level. In that way, we can develop learning abroad advising sheets in collaboration with departments and programs so that they are tailored specifically to each major and interdisciplinary program. We initiated department-specific conversations in the fall of 2006, when staff from the MCGI visited with every science department at Mount Holyoke College to discuss the educational benefits of learning abroad, how study abroad and summer opportunities might best fit with the particular major, and how faculty members in the department might leverage their international research collaborations to secure a summer internship for one of their students.

In a pilot project, we worked with the chair of the chemistry department to develop a "Learning Abroad for Chemistry Majors" webpage. It emphasizes the importance of learning abroad, whether it directly relates to the major or fits more generally with the student's overall academic program; provides recommendations on study abroad programs; guidelines for sequencing coursework to accommodate time away from campus; as well as recommendations on summer internships and research abroad that our recent students have found substantive and meaningful. It also includes a link to a searchable database we constructed which includes all the courses that students took abroad and received credit for at MHC (since 2001). Colleges and universities at the forefront of integrating learning abroad into the curriculum, major by major, are listed in Table 5.

Our plan for the coming months is to work with the chairs of each of our 48 departments and programs to develop web content that stresses the value of learning abroad in providing unique study and research opportunities that expand the student's understanding of, and engagement with, her major course of study. It will, of course, take time to develop tailor-made web pages for all departments and programs.



I hadn't even been outside of New England before I went to Denmark for study abroad! This might sound dramatic, but life did really change once I saw myself in another cultural, geographic, national environment.

*Amy Cagulada '07
Chemistry/Economics*

Table 5. Learning Abroad Advising Information by Major: Best Practices in the Field	
University of Minnesota	http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/academic/majors/index.html
Oregon State University	http://biology.science.oregonstate.edu/PDFs/IEO_template_updated_1.31.pdf
Goucher College	Handout with study abroad programs by major
Mount Holyoke College	http://www.mtholyoke.edu/global/13635.shtml

The process of developing department-specific advising pages is as important as the final product.

It is in the back and forth discussions of the process that faculty members and learning abroad staff can become true partners in the expansion and enhancement of learning abroad. The final outcome of this process will be faculty members who are more engaged with learning abroad, and students who will feel more encouraged, as departmental web pages and their advisors send clear messages about the value and possibilities of learning abroad.⁹ There are other important ways through which faculty members can become more involved in integrating learning abroad into their students' education. York University, for example, held a conference on learning abroad for scientists with other scientists as the featured panelists.¹⁰ A number of universities send faculty members abroad to assess the fit for students of specific programs and universities with the curriculum at home. That is especially valuable in the sciences. Although international travel involves expenses, the payoff of such visits is long-lasting.



I encourage my students to learn abroad...I want them to become well-rounded astronomy majors and global citizens.

Darby Dyar
Associate Professor of Geology and Astronomy


Another, more indirect strategy for enlisting faculty as advocates of learning abroad, is to facilitate short-term faculty visits abroad where the focus is on research and intellectual exchange and not at all on program and department assessment. Such visits, which are

⁹ In a survey by the Forum (2005) only 39 percent of institutions reported that academic advisors regularly include 'study abroad' into their advising discussions. The same survey indicated that only 20 percent of institutions normally include learning abroad information in materials about the major. With 46 respondents to the survey, the 'n' is rather small though for generalizable statements.

¹⁰ <http://international.yorku.ca/global/conference/science/scienceprog.pdf>

normally part of university partnerships, are intellectually exciting to faculty members and can have serendipitous outcomes for faculty's perspectives on learning abroad. International partnerships hold out great promise for faculty development in different respects. A 'world faculty' (McGill Peterson 2000) is a critical component of any effort to internationalize students' education.

When faculty are convinced of the value of learning abroad and see how it would fit into their students' course of study and the kind of opportunities that are available, they are much more likely to encourage their students to pursue such possibilities. They will be more likely to make learning abroad an integral part of conversations with advisees from day one. And then students from under-represented groups will be more likely to see learning abroad as a viable and important option.



The greatest impact of my time in China is that I now want to encourage all of our students to spend time abroad.

*Tom Wartenberg
Professor of Philosophy
(after spending two weeks lecturing at BLCU, Beijing, in 2006)*

Some universities and colleges have developed specific programs where learning abroad constitutes an integral part. Examples include the Global Citizenship Program at Lehigh University and the International Bachelor of Science in Biology, Conservation Ecology, and Computer Science at York University.¹¹

And at some colleges, departments have changed their course sequencing to make study abroad more compatible with major requirements on the home campus. Kalamazoo College, for example, requires each academic department to design its requirements and course sequences in a way that assumes that majors will study abroad for all or part of their junior year.

Enlisting More Parents in the Expansion of Learning Abroad

It is a greater challenge to enlist more parents in encouraging their children to seek out learning abroad opportunities. This is true in part because we have much less direct contact with parents, but also because of the tension between our recognition of the key role they play and the institutional philosophy and privacy laws that limit the nature of our relationship with them. At MHC, while we value the advice and encouragement that parents provide to their daughters, we struggle in many cases to convey the message that students must take responsibility for themselves and their decisions. Outreach to parents must avoid setting a false expectation that we will share information with the parent about the student's academic record or even about her conversations with our staff. It is not surprising that the existing resources for parents, like the ones referred to in Table 6, essentially duplicate information that is provided to students.¹²

¹¹ See <http://www.lehigh.edu/~ingc/gcindex.htm> and <http://www.science.yorku.ca/futurestudents/programs/iBSc/index.html>

¹² A recently published book by NAFSA is also geared at informing parents: Halstrand (2007).

Table 6. Learning Abroad Information for Parents: Examples	
University of Minnesota	http://www.parent.umn.edu/study_abroad.php
Boston University	http://www.bu.edu/abroad/parents/
Brown University	http://www.brown.edu/Administration/OIP/parents/
Middlebury	http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/sa/parents/

Like other colleges, Mount Holyoke sponsors information sessions on learning abroad during family weekend in the fall; these events are always well-attended by parents. But parents who attend such programs (or seek information from the website) generally are already interested in learning abroad, and are not the parents we most want to reach.

We need to make the case for learning abroad to parents who are skeptical, or perhaps ill-informed about what kinds of programs are available and whether they are financially feasible. During family weekend, the college also sponsors a mini-conference where students reflect upon their summer internships and research (abroad and in the U.S.) through panel presentations and posters. That kind of program might plant the seed of the value and accessibility of international summer experiences in the minds of some parents who are not already interested in opportunities abroad, but we can hardly rely on such serendipity. We in higher education will need to think a lot harder about how best to reach parents who are not convinced of the importance of learning abroad for their children, and to develop strategies to address their doubts and concerns, while maintaining appropriate boundaries around student confidentiality and rights to privacy.

As a first step, this year the MCGI will send all parents a copy of our student brochure “Invest in Your Future, Learn Abroad.” We hope that the brochure will spark interest in parents who might not have thought about learning abroad opportunities for their daughter, or open a window for discussion with those who have already dismissed it as impractical or not worthwhile.

Additional Ways to Target Under-represented Students

As more parents and faculty members become partners in encouraging students to learn abroad, more students from under-represented groups will be interested in following their advice, students from under-represented majors, ethnic/racial groups, and with a lower GPA. But additional measures can and need to be taken to address some of the specific concerns that students identify as obstacles to going abroad. Here we want to highlight three areas of action: reaching out to students of color, addressing financial concerns, and drawing out risk-averse students.

Reaching Out to Students of Color

All research shows that the key is student-to-student outreach. The more we can encourage and support returned students as advocates for learning abroad to their peers, the more effectively we can convey the message to students of color that learning abroad is for them. Last fall an Asian-American student who had studied in Australia for a semester organized a program on study abroad for students of color; several returning students spoke about their experiences, and students interested in learning abroad had the opportunity to raise questions and concerns in a comfortable setting.

We will seek to forge stronger connections with the cultural organizations on campus, which may prove to be effective partners in our efforts to reach out to students of color. Communication needs to flow both ways: if we can learn more from students about the specific nature of their concerns, we can develop materials and programs that educate and encourage students by effectively addressing real and perceived barriers.

Addressing Financial Concerns

Financial concerns rank very high nationally as an obstacle to study abroad. The Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act, currently pending in Congress, is aimed to alleviate that concern for thousands of students. At Mount Holyoke College, our data show that on the one hand students from lower income families are only slightly less likely to study abroad, but on the other hand, financial concerns are the second most important concern for students who did not study abroad. This discrepancy between perception and reality clearly suggests that the MCGI needs to increase its education efforts about the realities of financial support for studying abroad.

With respect to summer opportunities, however, the basis for concern is much more real. Institutions of higher learning in the U.S. set summer earnings expectations for their students on financial aid. Thus, for a student to consider an unpaid summer internship or research project is a huge challenge, as she must forego the income she is expected to have earned by the end of the summer. Mount Holyoke College, like other institutions, has competitive grants to cover a student's living expenses for summer projects. But the majority of them do not account for summer earnings expectations, as is the case at many (most?) institutions of higher learning in the U.S.



Though I came to Fuzhou to teach English, it was the students who were my Chinese teachers—teaching me everything from popular culture, to ping pong, to making dumplings, to traditional Chinese medicine...it became clear to me that an understanding of culture is the key to mastery of a language. I have advanced my knowledge of Chinese language and culture and plan to pursue work opportunities in China after graduation.

*Abigail King '08
Asian Studies major, Teaching
Intern, Minjiang University,
Fuzhou, China*

With the goal of unifying the application process for funding of summer opportunities (discussed in greater detail in section VI below) and the intent of joining efforts in encouraging more students to pursue such opportunities, several offices on campus came together in a self-appointed 'Summerübercommittee.'¹³ This committee was a ready-made starting point for the discussions on how to incorporate summer earnings expectations into summer grants. After bringing the Vice President of Enrollment and the Director of Student Financial Services into the conversation, we made the decision to incorporate summer

¹³ The committee includes the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Sciences, members of the Dean of the College's Office, of the Career Development Center, and of the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives.

earnings expectation into grant amounts gradually. In the summer of 2007, we included \$ 500 into grants for internships and research for eligible students to be applied towards summer earnings expectations. We will increase that amount over time and assess carefully whether this measure has indeed the intended effect of making it possible for more students to undertake summer internships.

Drawing in Risk-Averse Students

Our analysis shows that students who live in New England are less likely to study abroad than students who live in the Pacific region of the US, who in turn are less likely to study abroad than students who come to us from other countries. We infer that students who choose a college close to home are less willing to take risks than students who choose a college further away; the prospect of studying abroad, with all that it implies about travel, new experiences, and the importance of self-reliance, is more daunting to students who have not already taken such a risk in their college decision.

Risk-averse students may be more open to considering learning opportunities abroad that provide structure and that occur in locations they deem to be safe. While we want to encourage students to choose under-represented locations that will challenge their ideas and beliefs, we need to remember that those locations may be too much of a stretch for some students. We need to take care not to devalue the opportunities that exist in developed countries or English-speaking countries; for some students, those locations may be a significant challenge. Risk-averse students may also be more willing to consider short-term programs, another reason that it makes sense to offer students a range of opportunities.

IV. Development of Learning Abroad Opportunities in a Financially Viable Way

Strategies to encourage more students to learn abroad are aimed at increasing the demand for learning abroad, especially from under-represented groups. Of equal importance, however, are policies targeted at the supply of learning abroad opportunities. Demand- and supply-directed measures have to move forward in tandem to make growth in learning abroad educationally fulfilling as well as financially viable.

The main challenge on the supply side can be summarized in one word: *resources*. We estimated that if we want to fund all Mount Holyoke students for either study abroad or an international internship, we would need an additional \$1 million a year. That does not include the cost of the additional staffing that would be required to support a 100 percent learning abroad rate. Most institutions face similar financial challenges. There is no magic solution for bridging the gap between the current percentage of students learning abroad and the goal of 100 percent. Rather, the answer is a sustained effort on a number of different fronts over an extended period time.

One important element in such a multi-pronged strategy has to be an increase in endowed funds earmarked for learning abroad. Fortunately, Mount Holyoke College embarked on a capital campaign soon after it adopted the *Plan for Mount Holyoke College 2010*. Since

global education is a top priority in the Plan, raising money for international learning opportunities is among the fund raising priorities.

In this section, we discuss the range of other strategies we adopted to enable more students to study abroad or pursue summer opportunities in other countries. With respect to summer internships, we will focus particularly on the development of an international internship network to provide unique learning abroad opportunities for our students.

Study Abroad

The growth of interest in study abroad in the past few decades has resulted in a program boom: there is no shortage of high-quality programs and universities to host the increasing numbers of students whom we want to send abroad. But for colleges and universities that, like Mount Holyoke, do not offer a significant number of their own programs, relying on other programs comes at the steep price of sending our financial aid dollars elsewhere. Despite the fact that many programs abroad cost less than studying at Mount Holyoke College, many of our students cannot afford to study abroad without financial aid. The cost of allowing aid to follow a student abroad automatically would be prohibitive. Students at MHC apply for Laurel Fellowships, which substitute for the need-based aid that they would otherwise receive here. We typically fund 80 to 85 percent of the applications.

The trend among private liberal arts colleges has been to charge home school fees to students who study abroad, which (among other benefits) enables the institution to allow financial aid to travel freely. If most programs abroad cost less than study at the home institution, the differential between what the home school charges and what it then pays to programs can cover or significantly off-set the cost of providing financial aid to eligible students. Colleges that previously have limited the transfer of aid for study abroad and that have implemented home school fees, with aid fully transferable, generally have seen a significant increase in the number of students going abroad. But to keep costs under control, many institutions with home school fees still impose some form of restrictions; for example, limiting financial aid portability to its own programs or restricting the number of students who study abroad.

Mount Holyoke College considered a number of financial models, including home school fees. We decided that, at this juncture, the financial risks of the home school fee model outweighed the potential benefits for us. The Laurel Fellowship program is controllable, in that it enables us to set a budget each year and to increase funding for study abroad at a pace



My daily life was saturated with difference. In an environment entirely unfamiliar, I gained an understanding about what's truly essential in my life. This experience focused my academic interests, and I am planning do independent research on Sino-African relations during my senior year.

Abby Avoryie '08
International Relations and Anthropology
University of Hong Kong

that takes into account other institutional needs and priorities. While we are confident that home school fees would result in an increase in the number of students studying abroad, that increase would likely consist to a considerable degree of financial aid students, making it more challenging to project and control our costs.

After rejecting home school fees and studying in-depth different options, we decided to make a number of policy changes that will allow us to fund more students for study abroad, slowly but steadily.

- **Implement an administrative fee.** In 2005–06, Mount Holyoke decided to implement an administrative fee of \$750 per semester for all students who study abroad. For students who receive Laurel Fellowships, we include the fee in their cost of attendance and for determining their aid eligibility so that it does not increase their family contribution. Revenue generated by the fee enables us to increase funding for Laurel Fellowships, and helps support the services that many departments and offices continue to provide to all students while they are studying abroad.
- **Consider program cost as a factor in allowing financial aid to travel.** Program cost does not reliably correlate with program quality. Encouraging students to choose high quality programs that are competitively priced for their location very effectively enables one to stretch financial aid resources and thereby fund more students. This strategy dovetails with other institutional goals to encourage students to choose non-traditional locations, where study abroad costs generally may be less than they are in Western Europe and other developed regions.
- **Modify criteria for financial aid to ensure that funds are being used most effectively.** When we implemented the fee, we also limited funding to one semester for students studying in English-speaking developed countries and for all international students (unless a student can make a persuasive case that her study abroad project necessitates a year of funding). We also established a policy of special consideration for students in under-represented categories (e.g., science majors, students with little or no prior experience abroad) and for those choosing under-represented destinations.¹⁴ These policies support other institutional goals for learning abroad and encourage students to apply who might not have thought that study abroad was possible for them. We do not yet have sufficient data to evaluate the effectiveness of these changes, but we will continue to monitor study abroad participation and consider additional changes, if warranted.
- **Increase the number of reciprocal student exchanges.** Reciprocal exchanges are a cost-effective way to fund study abroad, as student fees and financial aid remain with the

¹⁴ National data show that grant funding has been used deliberately to increase diversity in learning abroad and in terms of destinations as well as participants. According to IIE (2007b, 12, 20), 31 percent of students receiving a Gilman scholarship went to Asia, in comparison to 8 percent of study abroad students who study in Asia, and 15 percent of Gilman recipients are African-American, compared to their 4 percent participation in the overall student body.

home institution. In the past year, we have signed or begun negotiating exchange agreements with four additional universities (in Costa Rica, Chile, China, and Spain).

- **Tap existing programs to maximize cost-effectiveness.** Where possible, we link new exchange agreements to our existing Language Assistant program, which brings native speakers of the languages we teach to study here and work in the language departments for one year. Students who come to Mount Holyoke as Language Assistants receive funding (tuition, room and board, plus a stipend) through the budget for that program whether or not we send a student in exchange. Agreements linked to this program enable us to negotiate outright tuition waivers for our outgoing students, thus minimizing their costs (they pay only for travel and living expenses).
- **Join existing consortia or create new ones.** By spreading the financial risk and increasing the applicant pool, consortial arrangements make it feasible to offer programs abroad that one institution alone cannot support. Together with Goucher we are currently developing a consortial program with the Monteverde Institute (MVI) in Costa Rica, to begin in spring 2009.

The start-up cost for a new consortial program is considerable. But one great advantage of building a new program is that faculty can be brought in from the ground. In the case of the Costa Rica program, professors from different disciplines, including the sciences, and administrators from both colleges traveled to MVI to learn about the possibilities and shape a curriculum that will maximize the educational benefits for our students, especially science and environmental studies majors.

- **Develop short-term programs (summer, January-Term).** Offering short-term programs are, institutionally, an economical way to offer more students the opportunity to study abroad. And for some students, a short-term program may be the most feasible way to study abroad, whether for personal, financial, or other reasons. Many institutions have expanded learning abroad through a growth in short-term programs; 45 percent of U.S. students studying abroad in 2004-05 were enrolled in short-term programs (IIE 2007, 61).



Mount Holyoke College intensive Chinese language program at Beijing Language and Culture University, summer 2006

We decided to keep our main focus on semester/year programs because of the added educational benefits of longer-term study. Nonetheless, for the reasons stated above, we have started to develop several January term courses abroad. And we have built up a very successful intensive language study program in Beijing over the summer, which we may replicate in other languages. One of our professors in Asian Studies played a critical role in the development of the Beijing program, yet another example of what can be achieved with faculty commitment.

Expanding Summer Research and Internships Abroad

Summer internships and research projects abroad have to be an important part of a college's learning abroad offerings, as they provide an educationally powerful and institutionally cost-effective way of developing global competencies in students. Students engaged in work and research abroad are typically more fully immersed in the host culture than students who study abroad; they work in a professional environment and contribute to the daily operations of their host organization; and they connect mainly with their co-workers whereas study abroad students tend to connect primarily with other students in their program. Summer research and internships abroad offer opportunities that prepare students for the professional and civic demands of a global world.¹⁵

Administrative Restructuring and Collaboration

At U.S. colleges and universities, internships—domestic and international—are normally under the purview of the career development center; and there is often not much communication between the career development center and the study abroad office. Mount Holyoke College used to be no different. However, with the mandate to internationalize the curriculum, the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives brought closer together previously disparate parts of international education. The MCGI has become the centralized 'agent' for summer opportunities abroad. It provides resources and programming to students interested in summer learning possibilities abroad (printed materials, advising, list serves, information sessions, and student panels on developing summer work and research opportunities abroad). With study abroad and international internship personnel in the same center many desirable synergies are being generated, particularly with respect to integrating learning broad better into students' educational pathways and assessing program and internship sites on travels abroad. The 'centralization' has also led to closer cooperation with the career development center, as those in charge of internships collaborate in their endeavors to integrate internships into students' education.

Network-based International Internship Programs

There are over 7,000 study abroad programs available to U.S. students. Mount Holyoke College, like many other institutions, spends considerable resources on maintaining quality assessment of the very limited number programs that we approve for our students. Similarly, on the worldwide web and elsewhere, there are thousands of listings for internships abroad. While we are in no position to establish quality control for generally listed internships, we made the decision to develop our own international internship program, where we would

¹⁵ See Legget (2007) for a discussion of the connection between learning abroad and social entrepreneurship and Susnowitz (2007).

indeed have quality control, and where we could tap into the international connections of our faculty, alumnae, and others related to the college to generate unique internship opportunities for our students that can be maintained and developed further over time.

Some students are able to develop their own international internships through research and personal connections. But a structured international internship program can increase access to learning experience abroad (especially for students who are more risk averse and have more limited personal networks) and provide a framework that maximizes the experience. York University, Oregon State University, Yale University and Princeton University have been at the forefront of developing international internship programs.

Table 7. Networked International Internship Programs: Institutions at the Forefront	
York University	http://international.yorku.ca/internships/index.htm
Oregon State University	http://ie3global.ous.edu
Yale University	http://world.yale.edu/abroad/intl_internships.html
Princeton University	http://www.princeton.edu/~iip
Mount Holyoke College	http://www.mtholyoke.edu/global/11626.shtml

Successful international internship networks are built on leveraging existing institutional connections, making every effort to select students based on their ability to be successful in the internship, and working both with interns and sponsors to carry out continual assessment on the appropriateness of the placement.

Leveraging International Connections

Faculty Connections: Institutions that establish networked-based internship programs typically rely heavily upon collaboration with faculty to cultivate international connections. The MCGI surveyed faculty to identify colleagues abroad who may be in a position to offer a summer internship. We have a very large percentage of faculty members who were either born abroad or have long-term research interests or collaborators abroad. We have been able to harness this wealth of international connections both to open doors for our students at organizations around the globe, and also to provide domestic students, who may be apprehensive about living abroad, with local contacts who can help them adjust to a new environment and culture.

Alumnae Connections: Alumnae living abroad, international students who have graduated and are working in the U.S., and alumnae working in organizations that have international connections are all critical resources in identifying organizations that could offer a meaningful international learning experience. While some alumnae may be able to place students as interns, others may be able to offer local support in terms of housing and orientation. The MCGI has worked closely with the Admission Office and the Alumnae Association to connect recruitment travel with the promotion of the internship program in meetings with local alumnae. In some cases, alumnae have been successful in finding outside sources of funding for specific internship opportunities.

Parent Connections: Parents who work abroad or in international organizations are an excellent resource for developing internship sites. As with alumnae, parents typically have a good sense of the curriculum and the level of work a student is capable of. International Offices can also take advantage of campus events that parents attend, such as Family Weekend and Commencement, to promote the international internship program and encourage parents to take on a new role within the wider institutional community.

Matchmaking

Matching the right student to the right internship opportunity is key in ensuring the success of the program and building trust among all stakeholders—sponsors, students, and faculty. Both the sponsor and the student must benefit from the partnership in order for it to be sustainable over time. The internships we offer are awarded to students solely on the basis of merit; our office carefully matches students to meet sponsor needs and expectations, and we select students based on their maturity, initiative, and academic background. The most successful internships are those for which sponsors provide both institutional structure, in terms of supervision and training, and the opportunity for substantive and meaningful hands-on engagement that put the student's quantitative and qualitative skills into practice.

The Director of International Experiential Learning in the MCGI works with internship sponsors to set expectations that are appropriate and meaningful for our students and oversees the recruitment and application process. It is critical to be able to select from a strong pool of applicants who have both the content-specific skills and personal characteristics that will equip them for a meaningful and productive experience. Faculty, of course, are instrumental in identifying and encouraging well-qualified candidates.

Managing Relationships: Interns and Sponsors

Networked internship programs are very labor-intensive. Both interns and sponsors require a substantial level of energy to ensure that the relationship is mutually beneficial. As critical reflection is a core component of experiential learning, it is important to engage students throughout the internship by posing reflective questions, asking them to keep a journal, hosting online chats, and soliciting submissions to newsletters and blogs. Debriefing



Mount Holyoke students are eager to put their considerable talents, curiosity, and energies to work by participating in summer opportunities abroad.

Fortunately, as professors we are equally eager to help match their interests and talents with the research and service being done by our many overseas colleagues. This summer, one of my students participated in an archaeological excavation in Jordan, another worked with youth affected by AIDS in Zambia, and a third assisted a team of cataract surgeons traveling through rural Ghana. It can take a lot of work to find the right fit for each deserving student, but the rewards make it well worth the effort.

Lynn Morgan
Professor of Anthropology

meetings, conducted after the completion of the internship, are essential in gathering data on the placement and getting students to articulate the value of their experience.

In addition, communication with sponsors needs to be ongoing and is critical in broadening the scope and substance of the placement. One of the benefits of institutionalizing internships is that it affords the opportunity to advance the internship over time, to restructure and refine the placement if necessary so that it both better fits the needs of the organization and better meets the learning goals of students. While communication with sponsors can be effectively carried out through email, there is no substitute for face-to-face contact to clarify expectations, to build trust, and to forge partnerships.

V. Maximizing the Educational Benefits of Learning Abroad

Watching the sun rise over Macchu Picchu or watching the sun set over the roofs of Paris can be unforgettable moments in a student's life. But that is not why colleges and universities consider it so important for students to go abroad. We want students to learn about other countries and cultures first-hand, develop greater understanding of other points of view and question their own assumptions in the process, improve their foreign language skills, move outside their comfort zone, and return with a more complex understanding of the world. To maximize the likelihood that learning abroad will have such a transformative impact, we need to provide structures that encourage students to think about why they want or should want to learn abroad, what type of learning experience abroad is best for them given their goals, and, once they return, to reflect upon their experience and its impact on their goals and aspirations.

“...just as the senior thesis or project is seen ... as the culmination of a student's four years in college, it seems to this author that undertaking research while studying abroad that can be combined with the appropriate literature on the return home and turned into a research paper or senior thesis represents the epitome of the liberal arts experience and ties together or “integrates” in the most complete way the student's time abroad with the home school curriculum taking the academic experience to new levels.”

Macey (2005, 57)

The results of our 2006 summer conference and a review of the literature reflect a consensus around the goals and best practices of academic integration of learning abroad experience (e.g. Forum 2005). Here we highlight practices that strike us as particularly important (rather than provide an extensive survey), with some examples from our experience at Mount Holyoke.

Learning Abroad as an Integral Part of a College Education: Institutional Structures

An institution sets the stage for curricular integration and signals the direction that learning abroad should take by embedding the importance of learning abroad in its pronouncements about its educational goals. For example, Colby College's ten precepts that guide the institution include:

“to become acquainted with other cultures by learning a foreign language and by living and studying in another country or by closely examining a culture other than one's own.”¹⁶

Institutional commitment to developing global citizenship becomes more real if it is reflected in individual mission statements, web pages, and catalogue entries of academic departments and programs. ***But at the end of the day, institutional commitment lives in the daily practice of the faculty.*** Faculty encouragement is the single most important factor in students' decisions whether to study abroad. When individual faculty members embrace the value of learning abroad, it is more likely that they will make the learning abroad experience an integral part of the advising and mentoring relationships with their students, before students go abroad and when they return. Students typically do not declare their majors until the spring of sophomore year (which is late to begin thinking about learning abroad), so we cannot rely on major-based resources only to get students to consider opportunities abroad. All faculty must put learning abroad on the radar screen of their pre-major advisees.

The centralized nature of the McCulloch Center, with advising for study, internships, and research abroad in a single office, provides significant advantages in promoting the importance of learning abroad. We can make the case to faculty, students, and others in an efficient and coordinated way. Our website and our printed materials present learning abroad as a range of opportunities, so that students can easily consider options and see where they might fit in best. At the beginning of the academic year, we send a publication to all students (except seniors): ‘Invest in your Future: Learning Abroad.’ Centralization has also enabled us to work collaboratively on promoting learning abroad, advising students, and planning for departure and re-entry. We collaborate on orientation for all students going abroad and on re-entry programs as well.

Preparing Students before They Go Abroad

The best orientation that we can provide to students before they go prepares them for the general experience of being in a foreign culture, encourages them to focus and solidify the academic and personal goals they began to develop when they first started thinking about opportunities abroad, and offers the culture-specific resources they will need to navigate successfully in their new environment. At this stage, we can again reinforce our commitment to curricular integration by encouraging students to think ahead to their return. While only some students will be able to visualize how their experience abroad will shape their educational pathway upon their return (and even those



“I quickly discovered that everyone in the lab—whether a Ph.D., professor, or research assistant—had one thing in common: a passion and enthusiasm for research. My summer research abroad was a life-changing and career-defining experience; in fact, I am in the process of making plans for a future collaboration.”

*Laura Trutoiu, '08
Global Studies Summer Fellow
Project: Virtual Reality and Vection
Max Planck Institute, Tuebingen,
Germany*

¹⁶ http://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/catalogue/2005_2006/general_information/colby_plan.cfm

students will often find that things develop in unanticipated ways), we can emphasize to all students the value of viewing their time abroad as part of an ongoing process of intellectual growth.

- **Preparation through courses.** A growing trend among US colleges and universities to offer academic courses designed to help prepare students for their experience abroad (and often for their return) illustrates a way in which faculty can play a key role in this stage of the process (see Table 8 for two examples). Such courses underscore the educational value of the learning abroad experience by virtue of their credit-bearing nature, and they can be particularly powerful ways of introducing students to the challenges of cross-cultural living. Most such courses necessarily are limited in enrollment, however, due to the significant institutional commitment that would be required to provide sufficient staffing.

Table 8. Academic Coursework for Predeparture Advising: Best Practice	
Kalamazoo College	http://www.kzoo.edu/cip/kpic/program_description.htm
Mount Holyoke College	http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/germ/Deutsch_214/

- **Preparation through programming.** The international office plays an important role in coordinating advising for all students going abroad. The integrated administrative structure for learning abroad at Mount Holyoke means that the study abroad and international internship staff collaborate on orientation programs for all students going abroad. For example, each year they coordinate a large and lively pre-departure program that kicks off with a panel of returned students who offer advice based on their experiences abroad (with guidance about important topics to cover), and ends with small group conversations based on country of destination. However, such collaborative programming has its limits. We also offer smaller, more focused, programs to address issues relevant to the different types of activities abroad. For example, students going abroad to do internships need to consider how to integrate themselves into a work environment in a foreign context, how to handle workplace issues, etc.

When Students Return: Structures to Integrate Their Experience into Their Education

Students returning from learning abroad are eager to share their many experiences. While it is important to have social occasions to welcome students back and exchange their ideas, it is our primary obligation as educators to provide structures that require students to be reflective and that oblige them to connect their experiences abroad to their academic experience at the home institution. Such venues will differ in the degree of depth of reflection, the length of reflection, and the amount of work involved on the part of the student as well as the faculty and staff of the international office.

- **Reflection through advising.** A dialogue with the student’s advisor can play a critical role in the student’s contemplation of what her experience means for her understanding of the world, herself, the subject matter of the major, and her future path. Of particular importance are discussions with faculty about how research or internship projects started abroad might lead to independent study projects or senior theses.

- ***Institutionalized reflection through special courses.*** Offering a credit-bearing course for returned students embeds the experience abroad in the curriculum. In a course context, students can reflect upon the challenges and insights of their experiences in a more analytical and historically-informed way. Trinity College in Hartford, for example, offers a 2-credit course for students who have returned from study in a Spanish-speaking country: “Studying in the Hispanic World Colloquium.”¹⁷
- ***Reflection through portfolio approach.*** Asking students to put together a portfolio while studying abroad makes them reflect in a more intentional way, not only when they return, but also when they are abroad. Dickenson College, for example, requires that students compile a collection of photos, written reflections, etc. over the course of their period abroad.
- ***Sharing Reflections in Public Fora.*** Public presentations require a level of preparation and seriousness that encourages students to think deeply about their experience and make connections to their course of study. They can range from luncheon talks at the departmental level to full-day conferences dedicated to student presentations on their time away.

Wellesley’s fall conference ‘Wellesley in the World’ provides a great example of what is possible. At an all-day conference where classes are cancelled and alumnae are invited back, students give presentations on their summer experience, after having worked with a faculty advisor. Mount Holyoke College invites students to reflect upon their summer experiences at a research symposium scheduled on Family Weekend. There are poster sessions and mediated panel presentations.

Public fora reinforce the institutional commitment to learning abroad and demonstrate the educational power of such experiences. They can plant the seed in students, and in some cases, parents, that learning abroad can be exciting, maybe transformative, and maybe for them as well.

- ***Other venues for reflections.*** Many institutions use a photo contest as a creative means for students to share their experiences abroad. We added a reflective component to the photo contest, where we ask students to submit a picture that captures a powerful insight they had into the world around us during their her time abroad, along with a title and a description of no more than 100 words.

These photo reflections promote learning abroad in a more subtle, yet engaging, way. We display the winning entries on our website, and in large format—in the café in our library. They also were the featured center fold in the quarterly publication of Mount Holyoke’s alumnae association.

International Offices can invite study abroad returnees to submit articles on their learning experience abroad—either to a campus publication or to wider publication that focus on learning abroad, such as *Transitions Abroad* (www.transitionsabroad.com), *Abroad View* (www.abroadviewmagazine.com), and *The Glimpse* (www.theglimpse.com).

¹⁷ <http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/Study/ModernLanguages/hispanic/courses.htm>

Not all venues work for all students. But if an institution offers a variety of venues, it increases the likelihood that reflection is not just an option for a few students, but an expectation for all.

What Next? Civic Engagement and Employment

Many students returning from a learning experience abroad are eager to continue their interactions with people from other cultures, especially the one in which they studied or worked. Returning students also often want to know how to present their experience abroad in a competitive job market and, in some cases, find work in their host country or abroad more generally. Offices on campus can collaborate to meet these aspirations.

- **Identifying Opportunities to build on the international experience.** The International Office can encourage students to identify opportunities on campus and in the local community to pursue interests they developed while abroad. The MCGI plans to collaborate with other offices on campus, including the Community-Based Learning Program and the office in charge of volunteer services, to inform returned students on ways in which they can build on their international experience outside of the classroom.
- **Marketing the international experience.** Employers value initiative, adaptability, comfort with ambiguity, and cross-cultural competency, the very qualities that students demonstrate and develop during their time abroad. The Career Development Center can help students articulate the value of their experience in the job search.
- **Finding Employment Abroad.** The MCGI and the Career Development Center collaborate in workshops on developing strategies for finding work abroad and with organizations in the U.S. that have a global focus.



Waiting

Janelle Matrow '07
Teaching Intern, Yangchen Choling
Monastery, Spiti Valley, India
winner of the Global Images Contest,
2006, Mount Holyoke

This photo was taken on a windy, rainy Himalayan day in mid-august. The nuns, adorned in their best regalia of hand sewn yellow robes, wait patiently in the cold for the arrival of their most respected guest: Karma Lekshe Tsomo. The yellow robe is called chogu and is traditionally worn on special occasions. It is made of 25 patchwork strips called namcha sewn in a design indicative of renunciation and monastic seniority. This was the only event that I witnessed the nuns in such robes. The two nuns, Montok (left) and Kasong (right), have been nuns since the age of 3 and 4. They are not only loving and devoted cousins, but they are also best friends.

VI. Assessment

Belief in the transformative potential of a learning experience abroad is as ubiquitous as the belief in liberal arts education's power as the basis for life-long employability and civic engagement. Faced with growing demands for accountability and hard evidence that these beliefs are supported empirically, institutions of higher learning have started to take a closer look at the assessment of learning outcomes. That is true for higher education generally, and learning abroad in particular.¹⁸

The first step towards assessment is, of course, the specification of learning outcomes. And that's where the debates begin. What are the desirable learning outcomes? And even when we agree on a set or subset of outcomes, e.g. critical thinking or a deeper understanding of another culture, then how do we measure those seemingly unmeasurable qualities? And even when we agree on an acceptable measure, then when should we measure? At the end of a course? At the end of a learning abroad experience? At the time of graduation? Ten years out?

The vexing challenges of assessment in education should, of course, not prevent us much from trying to assess learning outcomes. But it should make us understand that there is no one perfect instrument out there. In the end, assessment will have to consist of a number of different quantitative and qualitative measures taken at different points in time. That is true for the assessment of learning abroad as well.¹⁹

The emphasis in more systematic tests is frequently on measures of intercultural learning. One of the most comprehensive studies to date is being undertaken at the University of Georgia. Comparing learning outcomes of students who had studied abroad with those who had not, Sutton and Rubin (Frontiers Article, p 73) found a significant difference in favor of study abroad on the measures of functional knowledge, knowledge of world geography, of cultural relativism, and of global



Weltmeister Dreams

Michelle Thorne '07

Global Images Contest, 2006, Mount Holyoke

The World Cup of 2006 ignited in Germany an unprecedented passion for soccer. Flags streamed from cars, chants filled the air, and the entire country was alive with the spirit of "Fussball." There was electricity in the air; the nation tingled with anticipation. Could the National Eleven carry the country to victory?

¹⁸ There are some interesting attempts to measure the degree of internationalization in higher education. Under the auspices of the Center for Higher Education, Brandenburg and Federkeil (2007) for example, developed a complex metric for the internationalization of higher education, including 162 indicators which range from the share of professors who received their doctorate abroad to the share of staff for whom foreign language proficiency was a requirement for hiring to the number of joint cross-border research projects to active partnerships.

¹⁹ For an excellent introduction to some of the key issues in outcomes assessment in learning abroad see Bolen (2007).

interdependence.²⁰ There are currently numerous efforts under way to develop new tools for assessing learning outcomes in study abroad. Table 9 highlights some of the key endeavors.

Table 9. Development of Assessment Instruments for Learning Abroad. Examples of Current Efforts
Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), Associated Colleges of the South (ACS), Great Lakes College Association (GLCA) <i>Liberal Education and Study Abroad: Assessing Learning Outcomes to Improve Program Quality</i> [funded by the Teagle Foundation]
Furman University, Austin College, Juniata College, and Washington and Lee University <i>Value-Added Assessment of Student Learning in the Liberal Arts: Assessing the Impact of Engaged Learning</i> [with Austin College focusing on study abroad] [funded by the Teagle Foundation],
Forum on Education Abroad and James Madison University. <i>The BEVI Project</i>

We did not develop a new tool for measuring the value added of the different learning abroad experiences that we are vigorously promoting . But we are interested in applying one or several of those that are currently being developed, if we find them compelling.²¹

With respect to our own practices we want to highlight the outcome of two quantitative assessment projects. The first one is a quantitative analysis of a survey of Mount Holyoke alumnae about learning outcomes in foreign language learning and study abroad. The second project is the development of a unified data base that is needed as a baseline against which to measure the quantitative outcome of the expansion of learning abroad.

The Empress is Wearing Clothes

The achievement of basic proficiency in another language has historically been considered an integral part of a liberal arts education regardless of the specific nature of a student’s major. Globalization makes it imperative for students to have cross-cultural understanding and awareness and the ability to communicate across linguistic boundaries in order to have successful careers. Basic proficiency in another language and culture is one of the most important ways in which Mount Holyoke can prepare students for life in a global world.

²⁰ The differences hold even after controlling for GPA.

²¹ Like many other schools, Mount Holyoke asks students returning from abroad to evaluate their experiences. We are revising our study abroad evaluation form to ask returned students what their goals were for study abroad, and how successfully they were met. At the same time, we are revising our application for study abroad to require students to articulate more explicitly their goals at that early stage of the process. By matching up the information that students provide before going abroad and upon their return, we will begin to compile some useful data about students’ goals prior to going abroad, how their goals change during their time abroad, and how successfully the goals are met.

In order to assess the role of study abroad in foreign language learning, and of both in the acquisition of cultural literacy, we conducted a survey of all MHC alumnae of the classes of 1990-2005.²² For the purpose of this White Paper, we will highlight two important findings.

- **Study abroad enhances language proficiency.** Alumnae were asked to assess their language proficiency at the time of graduation, in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.²³ The percentage of alumnae who assessed their speaking proficiency as ‘average’ or ‘high’ was considerably higher for those who studied abroad than for those who had not. And among those who studied abroad, those who had studied in a foreign language indicated a significantly higher percentage of ‘average and high’ proficiency than those who studied abroad in English.²⁴
- **Foreign language learning increases basic cultural literacy. This effect is heightened considerably when combined with study abroad, particularly in a non-English speaking country.** The overwhelming majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that learning a foreign language enriched their understanding of other cultures and that it helped them understand other points of view. These benefits of foreign language learning were statistically significantly higher for those who studied abroad, and even higher for those who studied abroad in a language other than English.

A Unified Database and Application Process for Summer Opportunities Funding: A Sine Qua Non for Quantitative Assessment and Other Goals

The most intractable challenge facing our program to encourage student learning abroad is the need keep track and assess learning opportunities abroad *that do not earn credit* (i.e., internships and other types of independent research). Before 2004, Mount Holyoke was typical of many institutions in dealing with this challenge:

- There were *16 different organizations* on campus, ranging from the Career Development Center to the Dean of Students to individual academic departments to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute-funded summer research program, each of which awarded funds for summer opportunities of all types. These opportunities were variably publicized to students.
- Students could apply to as many of these entities as were appropriate (many of them did submit multiple applications); each application was completely separate, and *each required its own recommendation letter from a faculty member*.
- Each entity *convened its own committee*, reviewed all the applications that were submitted, employed its own criteria for funding, and chose the funding levels independently.

²² This survey, like the other ones we undertook, is another good example of the need for collaboration among different offices. The Alumnae Association posted the survey on Survey Monkey and alerted alumnae via email, the Dean of the Faculty’s Office covered the cost, and the Director of Institutional Research helped with the design of the survey and processed the results. 1,759 alumnae responded to the survey, a response rate of around 22 percent.

²³ Objective assessment of proficiency standards would obviously be preferable to self-assessment, but the College does not have such data.

²⁴ In both cases, the differences are statistically highly significant.

- Timing of decisions by various funding entities was variable.
- Only a few of the organizations that funded students required any type of confirmation that the proposed work actually happened.
- There was no centralized reporting scheme to avoid “double-dipping” into different funds by the same students, and no way of keeping track of who did what.

This situation was incredibly wasteful of faculty and administrative time in terms of both writing recommendation letters and then serving on review committees (one faculty member who served on many such committees reported seeing the same funding request four times!). Administrators spent countless hours tracking down missing transcripts, application essays, and letters of recommendations. The situation also made it impossible to assess the quality and quantity of summer internships in general, and on internships abroad in particular.

We have now completed our third year of developing a highly successful program that mitigates all of these problems and ensures that funding is fairly and evenly distributed. The program has two components: the universal application form, which we implemented three years ago, and the development of a summer activities data base which we are implementing for the first time in the fall of 2007.

The Universal Application Form (UAF) is an on-line system that collects all student applications for summer funding from the College, along with faculty letters of recommendation.

- The ‘Summerübercommittee’ jointly publishes a brochure ‘*Make Your Summer Work for You,*’ which is distributed to all students and faculty towards the end of the fall semester when students start thinking about the following summer. It highlights the top 10 reasons why students should consider a summer opportunity, domestically or abroad, includes student testimonials from past summers, and calls attention to the UAF.



Robin Nedelcu '07
Global Images Contest, 2006, Mount Holyoke

This is one of the photos I treasure the most from my time abroad in Mali... Coming from the United States, Pictured here is a Muslim man praying on the steps of the Great Mosque of Djenné, which is known for being the largest mud building in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage site. ...In many ways, this was a hard picture to take. I tried my best to not be the annoying tourist in seek of the “authentic cultural experience.” Yet here I was taking a picture of something not only for the fact that it was different from the American experience, but for the fact that this was something I was actually experiencing. I wondered why the man was not inside praying...

- The characteristics of the UAF include a common deadline and descriptions of all MHC-administered funding opportunities.
- Monthly emails remind students and faculty of the upcoming UAF deadline.
- Prior to the submission deadline, students can take advantage of seminars on how to write a successful request and edit their essays.
- The application is submitted on-line, and it closes at a single, specific date and time.

The Summer Activities Data Base. We will collect data each fall from students regarding their summer activities in order to:

- provide a richer student profile for advising,
- easily and consistently report (internally and externally) on summer activities of MHC students,
- use the information provided to generate additional networks and summer opportunities for student,
- provide a place for students to store this information that they will need later on for grad school applications and their resumes,
- keep track of the number of students who conduct internships and research abroad over the summer.

As an incentive for students to provide this information, we will make registration for Spring semester contingent on students providing summer information. Students will have ample opportunity over the summer and in the fall to log-in and record their information. Students not providing their information before registration will be put on registration hold. We will develop a robust communication plan to get students on board. It will be important for faculty to be well informed about this process so that they can support the College's goals and make good use of the additional information in their advising sessions.

Once the online data collection form is in place, we will be able to construct a unified data base on all students who learn abroad, those who study abroad for a semester or a year and those who avail themselves of internship and research opportunities in the summer. That database will provide the base line again which we can measure over time the increase of students learning abroad. It will also provide the basis for an analysis of which students choose which learning abroad opportunities for which reasons.

VII. Conclusions

Many U.S. colleges and universities have now endorsed the goal of making learning abroad an integral part of undergraduate education. In this White Paper we mapped out ways for expanding learning abroad opportunities in educationally meaningful and financially viable

ways. The analysis and the recommendations are based on the experience of Mount Holyoke College, contextualized in best practices in the field. We anticipate that they will be of use to others, irrespective of whether they are at a liberal arts college or a different type of institution of higher learning, as we are all wrestling with similar challenges in our aspirations to make learning abroad possible for more, and eventually all, students.

Among the many lessons and suggestions we share in this paper, two stand high above the others: the importance of a *coordinated and integrative process and strategy in the conceptualization and implementation of a quantum leap in learning abroad, and the pivotal role of the faculty* in making many of the critical steps in the expansion and integration of learning abroad happen.

The expansion of learning abroad in a substantial, meaningful, and financially feasible way requires concerted effort and collaboration among all stakeholders. This is true for the implementation of the Lincoln Commission's ambitious goal as well as for that of an individual institution like Mount Holyoke College, which aims to enable every student to learn abroad at some point during her college years, whether through summer internships, research opportunities or more structured credit-bearing study abroad experiences.

A centralized office is needed to take charge of the implementation of an institutional mandate for global education. That office can initiate a review and an analysis of learning abroad at the institution and bring together the relevant parties in the conceptualization and implementation of an overall plan and specific policies. And while that office must take responsibility for most of the work involved, it is the systemic and coordinated collaboration among different actors that will be the key to success.

To bring about a quantum leap in learning abroad, it is important for an institution to move on as many fronts as possible at the same time. Some of the strategies we discuss require significant resources, others do not. But all depend critically on an institutional commitment to translating lofty rhetoric about the integration and expansion of learning abroad into tangible educational outcomes for students.

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